BUDDHISM IN PAKISTAN

by

A Pakistani Buddhist

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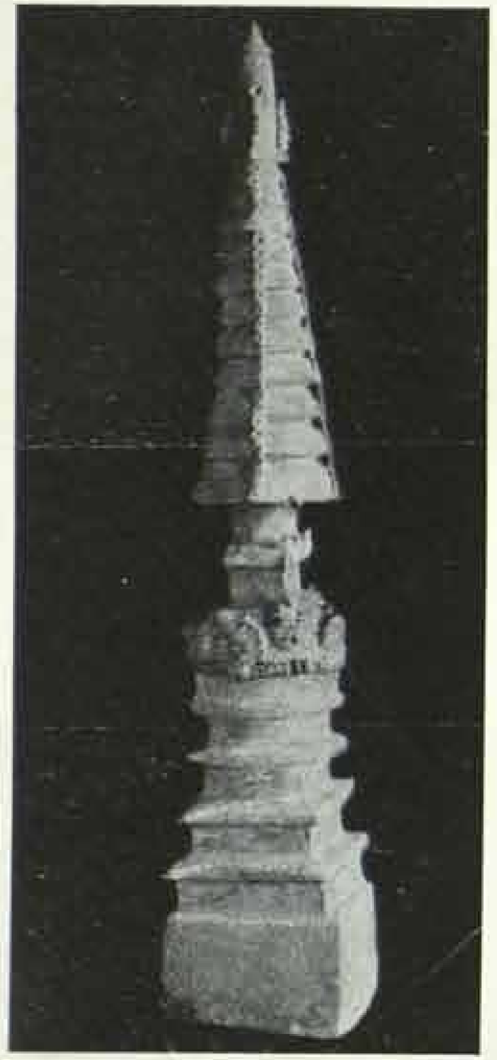
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Panoramic view of Taxila Valley with the city of Sirkap (2nd Cent., B.C. to 2nd Cent., A.D.) in the back-ground

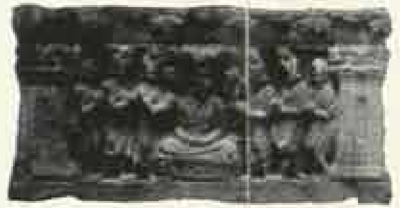


Panoramic view of Haro Valley, Taxila, with the Buddhist Monastery of Jaulian in the fore-ground





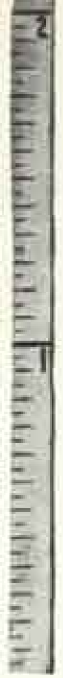
Reliquary in stupa form found from Jaulian, Taxila















Gandhara stone friezes depicting scenes from Buddha's life. (North-West Frontier Province. Cir., 2nd Cent., A.D.)



A group of terracotta figures found in a niche in the monastery at Jaulian, Taxila. (Cir. 4th Century A.D.)

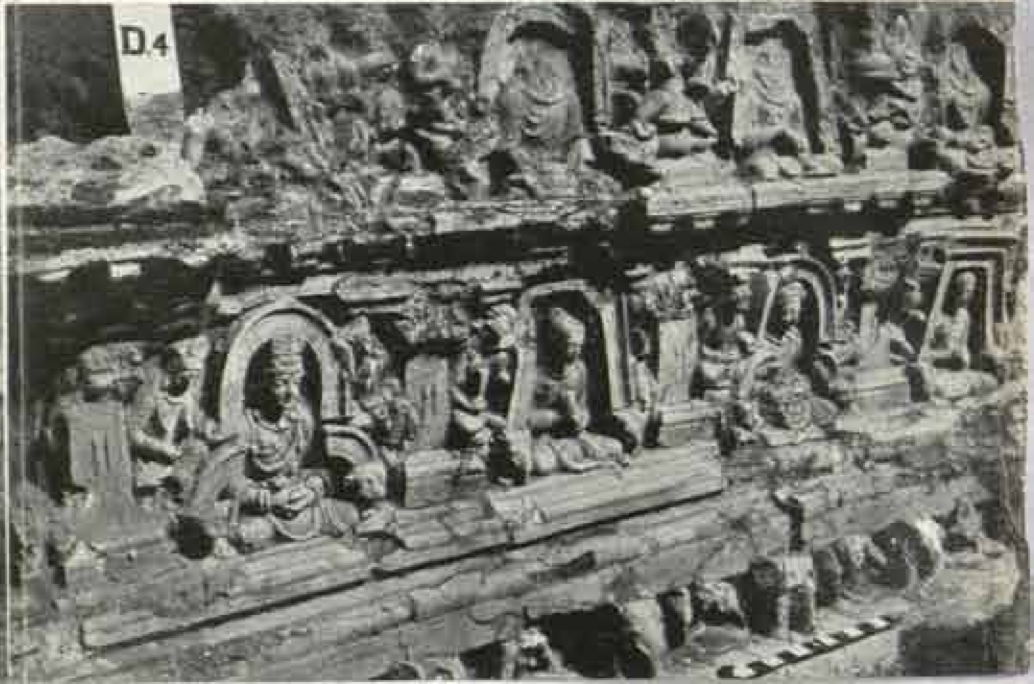


Stucco image of the Bodhistava Maitreya, found from Jaulian, Taxila (5th Century A.D.)

General view of the stupas at Jaulian, Taxila. (Cir. 2nd to 5th Cent. A.D.)



Small stucco sculptures in situ on Stupa D. 4 at Jaulian, Taxila. (5th Century A.D.)



BUDDHISM IN PAKISTAN

INTRODUCTION

The story of Buddhism is the story of a great revolution with far-reaching consequences. It marks a new stage in the evolution of human culture. It marks a break from the ancient world, from its hoary surroundings, from the depredation of caste system which was dragging the humanity from its high pedestal and finally from a hopeless state of mind labouring under the awe of a never-ending tortuous cycle of births. It was Buddha who told the world for the first time that it was possible for a human being to exert and get free from the clutches of circumstances, of cause and effect and the *Karma*, if he so desired and acted.

The psychic emancipation, offered by the teachings of the New Master, released the hidden forces of human mind which ushered a new era of progress and prosperity extending beyond India to the shores of Japan in the East and Syria in the West. To Heinriech Zimmer and others of his understanding the philosophy of Buddhism may still sound paradoxical, and many of its enigmas may still remain

unsolved by the modern thinkers who have Greece for their guide, but its unprecedented rise and growth of influence merits serious attention.

After a spell of purely monastic seclusion Buddhism emerged with a missionary zeal and gave a new impulse to all walks of life: philosophical, ethical, social, linguistic, literary and religious; and within a few centuries of its advent influenced the entire known world.

The Buddhist Epoch carries a great importance for the historian of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Unlike the pre-historical personages of India such as Rama and Krishna, who are known to us only through myths and kaleidoscope of epics, Buddha is a historical figure. He is a man of the known era. He walked about and taught in the Magadha Desha; and the reliquaries containing his ashes and relics (dhatu) are still in existence and form some of the most valuable and proud possessions of the museums today.

The advent of Buddhism was of particular importance for the North-Western regions of Pakistan. The devotees of this religion, within three hundred years of the death of their Tathagatta, made this region a holy place. Buddha, who in his lifetime did not probably come out of the boundaries of Magadha and modern Uttar Pradesh, was by tradition imported to several places in the North-West in order to add to its glory and sanctity. The shrewd monks and their zealous followers could not sit content with a few visits of their lord to their beloved homeland. Many more new places were consecrated where, according to their mythology, Buddha had lived in his previous existences, or where

some of the previous 24 Buddhas had moved the Wheel of the Law.

It is common knowledge that the West Pakistan areas seldom had to share the fate of the rest of the sub-continent. Having formed part of the Persian Achaemenian empire for centuries, these areas went Hellenistic on the conquest of Alexander. Thereafter, having remained Mauryan for some time, they passed into the hands of the Indo-Parthians, Scythians, Yavanas, Kushanas and Huns respectively. These cataclysmic changes, interspersed by eras of peace and progress, wrought a healthy development in the domain of art and helped the people to develop a unique sculpture. This, when applied to depict the Buddhist legend, gave birth to a superb art and made Gandhara a model province for the whole of the Buddhist world.

The beautiful statue of Buddha is the proud production of Gandhara which was accepted and copied in every country where homage was paid to the Lord Buddha. The zeal of the ancient Pakistan for the religion of the Tathagatta can be gauged by the excellence of sculpture, the historical remains and the number of sites which out-number all the Buddhist vestiges in the whole of India.

The Buddhist Gandhara School is the only school of art in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent which, in spite of its legendary and spiritual background, developed on the most natural lines and where accuracy of anatomical details in engraving was the only criteria of perfection.

The Brahman onslaught destroyed the last vestige of the Buddhist art in India, and when Fahien visited India, he found Kapilavastu a deserted city and Lumbini a forlorn place. But conditions were

absolutely different in the North-West where hundreds of monks were still preaching. The province of Sind enjoyed the Buddhist rule till the 7th century A.D., and was overthrown by a clever Brahman named Chach whose son in turn invoked the enmity of the Arab Caliph and lost his kingdom.

The North-Western regions of the sub-continent, which today constitute West Pakistan, seem to have been well advanced in arts and crafts. Milindapanho gives a list of professions according to which even the manufacturers of bows and arrows had to pass through three workshops. The winnowing of grain, as described in Milindapanho (Questions of Menander) also indicates a similar division of labour. Apart from these, there were settlements of carpenters and metal-smiths. The settlement of carpenters is described to be capable of producing all sorts of furniture and even the sea-going ships. The workers in stone could build houses and hollow a cavity in a crystal to make a cage for a mouse.

Ivory work, weaving, confectionary, jewellery and work on precious metals, pottery, garland-making and head-dressing are depicted as some of the honourable professions. Slaying of animals, tanning, snake-charming, acting, dancing and singing were some of the inferior and even despised professions.

The Jatakas give a vivid but scanty account of trade and commerce. It was highly developed before Buddha's birth, as anecdotes connected with his life amply illustrate. The overland caravans are sometimes represented as going East and West and across deserts that took days. The desert route mentioned here may be one leading from Magadha through Rajputana to Sind and further north to Gandhara. Drought, famine, wild beasts, robbers and

demons are said to be severely besetting these desert routes. Some of these desert routes passed through Rajputana to the port of Bharukacha (Barugaza or Broach), whence the goods were transmitted to Babylon. Jatakas tell of Anathapindikas' caravan travelling to the borders, which probably meant towards Gandhara. From East to West the traffic was largely by river, going up the Ganges to Satajati and up the Jamuna to Kosambi. Further westward the journey was mainly overland till the caravans reached Sind. Sind at that time was a great exporter of pedigree horses. In the north of Sind lay the great highway which connected India with the Central and Western Asia. Another route passed from Magadha to Sagala (Sialkot), Taxila and Peshawar in Gandhara. This great road and its connections are shown in Jatakas as relatively safe in early Buddhistic days, and instances abound of the sons of nobles passing unattended to Takshasila (Taxila) for learning.

It was in this background that Buddhism made its appearance in the wake of Asoka's great empire and turned the North-Western region into one of its principal centres for many centuries.

MAHAYANA SCHOOL

The religious practices of Bhakti, which were already evident in the teachings of Asoka, were for some time receiving the support of a new Buddhist philosophy. But the princes of Hellenistic stock, including Menander (Milinda of the Buddhist Texts), could not think of a religion without gods and their effigies; and Buddha, who was so far conspicuous by the absence of his images, now found a place in sculpture. But since his shape was not remembered by the followers, he was represented by the shape of a Greek god. Buddha, thus, came to be revered as a divine being. The belief, that numerous Buddhas (Buddhas of the Past and Buddhas of the Future) assist the devotee in his attempt to attain the Buddhahood latent in him, took a firm root.

They argued that their goal was not Arhathood or Nirvana for themselves. Since they were all sons of the Buddha and had already achieved enlightenment, their duty now was to lead the whole of humanity to salvation.

While the orthodox doctrine was called the "Small Ferry-Boat" (Hinayana) in which the individual was to cross the stream of life to the shores of Nirvana, the new doctrine came to be known as the "Big Ferry-Boat" or Mahayana in which an enlightened monk ferried all the yearning souls to their release and enlightenment, and finally achieved Tathagattahood as Sidharatha did achieve.

The word Hinayana was unknown in the early Buddhist literature and is not found in the Pali Pitakas. It came into use in the early Buddhist Sanskrit works which mark the advent of a progressive element in the religion. But in the later Mahayana works it was particularly used as a term of disparagement.

Although Mahayana gained wide popularity and spread fast into the North, it was strictly speaking the Buddhism of the South for, according to Nalinaksha Dutta, it originated in the South but later on became popular in the North spreading thence to China, Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia and Japan. It was Hinayana, on the other hand, which had a northern origin and spread towards the East over Bengal, Burma and Siam (Thailand) after having been recognised in the time of Asoka.

Heinriech Zimmer in his 'Philosophies of India' holds that Mahayana could not be a vulgarization of the religion by any stretch of imagination.

The followers of Mahayana believed that the "Big Ferry-Boat" was capable of carrying all humanity to Buddhahood. According to this teaching, however, the goal is not Arhathood or Nirvana for oneself but rather the position of a *Bodhistava* (an embryo Buddha) who, for the time being, refrains from attaining the goal in order to act as helper of humanity and a saviour to others, seeking

salvation. It is in line with this doctrine that Buddha himself is designated as a Bodhistava in his previous existences.

The Hinayana thinkers had believed in a number of Buddhas but the Mahayana carried the multiplication of the divine beings much farther. They adopted countless Bodhistavas and numerous deities as associates of Buddhas.

The Mahayana philosophy had its roots in the Sarvastivada school of early Buddhism which believed in the reality of all as the name itself denotes. Since this school of thought had prevailed in Gandhara and Kashmir, the Mahayana school was readily accepted in these areas during the time of Menander (Milinda) and Kanishka, and from there spread all over the North-Eastern Asia including China and Japan.

Kanishka was a powerful king of the Kushan dynasty which ruled astride the Himalayas and the Karakoram regions, stretching from Chinese Turkestan in the North to Sind in the South. His capital was Purushapura (modern Peshawar). He covened a famous Council which was a landmark in the history of Buddhism. Taranatha tells us that soon after the Council of Kanishka some Hinayanic monks attained Annutpattika Dharmakshanti and began to deliver Mahayanic discourses.

From this account of Taranatha, it is evident that Mahayanism with its new Doctrine appeared as an institution soon after Kanishka's Council, *i.e.* in the first century A.D.

Whatever the dates of its emergence and inception, Mahayana gave Buddhism a wider popularity and a superior art which was copied throughout the Orient without much alterations.

GANDHARA ART

From the life time of Buddha to the days of the great Emperor Asoka Maurya the religion of the Master was confined to the recluse and the mendicant who sought salvation through renunciation of the world and all that bound him to his mundane surroundings. A laity of sympathisers, patrons and people who professed real allegiance to the religion and followed the path of transcendental virtues, had been created by the elders, but still the religion was confined to the few ascetics in a narrow geographical area.

The conversion of Emperor Asoka by the great Buddhist monk Uppagupta, elevated the doctrine of individual spiritual exercises to the position of a popular and widely propagated world religion.

In the 19th or, according to some historians, 21st year of his reign, Asoka summoned a Council to *ratify* the Order and clear it of some heretical rites. Uppagupta's Kathavatthu, composed at the time of this Council, gives a full record of the divergence of opinion that existed at the time of the convention. After the Council

Asoka launched an ambitious programme of converting the whole of the then-known world to his beloved faith and organised a large missionary force. The names of all those persons who were sent to different places have been preserved. Kashmir and Gandhara formed part of the kingdom of Emperor Asoka, and Madhyantika was sent to preach Buddhism there. This monk, it is said, succeeded in converting the entire area now comprising the North-West Frontier, part of the North Punjab, the Lower Indus Valley and the whole of Kashmir. The foundation was, thus, laid for the creation of one of the novel specimens of art in the Buddhist iconography which was later on copied in all details by the entire Buddhist world.

Gandhara was the region where Hellenism in its eastward course and Buddhism in its westward march came in direct contact and worked out an artistic synthesis.

The region of Gandhara had never been a part of India before the advent of the Mauryans. Its history had been chequered. Before the invasion of Alexander it was a part of the Persian Empire of the Achaemenians. The adventures of Alexander into this land are said to have been motivated by the desire to occupy every inch of the Persian Empire. After the death of Alexander the Greek challenge evoked a Hindu repercussion and Chandra Gupta Maurya, a ruler of Northern India, incorporated this region for the first and the last time into a Hindu Empire. His grandson Asoka, however, embraced Buddhism, which became the state religion of the Mauryan Empire.

After the death of Asoka in 231 B.C., the Empire began to break up, and Gandhara, being one of the distant provinces, was able

to assert her independence, but only to fall a prey to the Bactrian Greek invaders from Central Asia. By 250 B.C., the Seleucid Empire had lost its eastern provinces to two succeeding Greek States. Diodotus had established a small kingdom in Bactria and Arsaces in Parthia. Parthians penetrated the sub-continent as far east as the Indus. Bactria, under Demetrius carried arms across the Hindu Kush and annexed the Kabul Valley and Gandhara in 190 B.C. A succession of Hellenic rulers changed the cultural life of Gandhara. The most outstanding of these was Milinda or Menander. According to Strabo this monarch extended his sway even farther East than Alexander had done. He figures as the chief actor of a very important Buddhist romance known as Milindapanho or the Questions of Milinda. According to this Milinda ruled in a city called Sagala, which has been identified as modern Sialkot. As described in the early text of Buddhism, Menander was eloquent, learned and conversant with many arts and sciences.

According to Milindapanho Menander came under the influence of a famous Buddhist sage Nagasena.

This accord of East and West did not, however, endure very long. The pressure of Yueh-chi or the White Huns was hurling tribes and ruling clans from Bactria and neighbouring countries which, one after the other, turned in an ever increasing waves towards the Indus Valley, defeated the existing monarchs and established their own principalities in close succession. Sakas and Pehlavas occupied the North-Western regions of the sub-continent. The Yueh-chi who had driven them from Bactria, soon followed them through the Kabul Valley to Gandhara. The principal tribe of the Kushans and their ruler Kujula Kadphises

extended their conquests to Gandhara. The successors of Kadphises conquered the entire Indo-Gangetic plain.

Kanishka, as we have seen, was the greatest and most powerful ruler of the Kushan dynasty. His Empire extended from the borders of China to the frontiers of Gujarat. Under him, for the first time in the history, Gandhara ceased to play the role of a frontier province. His capital was Purushapura, the Peshawar of today.

Kanishka, when he became a king, was the follower of some non-Buddhist religion, but like Asoka he was converted to this faith and like Asoka again he had all the zeal of the convert. To settle the affairs of the state he often consulted the holy scriptures of the Buddhist religion and was fond of theological discussions. He was very much dismayed to find vast differences in the opinions of various Buddhist sects. Parsva, one of the Buddhist elders, told him that the differences were due to the fact that the Tathagatta (the Enlightened One) had left the world long ago and that with the passage of time the followers were forgetting the real word of the Master. Each group held its own views and was intolerant to others. Kanishka, therefore, called his famous Council or Holy Assembly which was attended by five hundred monks and presided over by Vasumitra. After long and arduous discussions all the minor differences were resolved and new commentaries on the three Pitakas were prepared which ran into about 300,000 verses. These commentaries which dealt with all questions great or small, were then engraved on copper plates. Kanishka placed these plates in a stone chest which was deposited in a stupa erected to consecrate and preserve them.

The Council of Kanishka, thus, ended the old quarrels on petty

differences but actually, ironically enough, the great schism between the Mahayana and Hinayana schools occurred at about this very time. The Mahayana school, which can be said to have reached its maturity by this time, completed the cleavage by declaring itself a second school of thought.

This, however, is the period when the Buddhist Plastic Art of Gandhara reached its zenith. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to unearth any monuments which can be dated any further back than the advent of the Mauryan dynasty.

The number of monuments belonging to the Mauryan and Sunga dynasties can also be counted on fingers. The stupas of Barhut and Sanchi, the balustrades of the same style exhumed from Amrauti and Mathura, the monolithic pillars of Asoka and the caves he prepared for the use of the mendicants of different religions, if added to the lot, complete our list of all the contributions the Buddhist School of that time had made towards the most popular faith of the period.

The most striking feature of the pre-Gandhara schools is the conspicuous absence of the *Man* from whose life and former existences they had set themselves to carve in stone and paint in colours. We find them naturally puzzled but industriously carrying out the strange undertaking of representing the life of Buddha without the Buddha. Their effort was to create a feeling of the presence of Buddha whose image could not be represented as, according to their belief, he had risen above all attributes and forms. We, thus, invariably find the throne left vacant. At the most, there is a symbol indicating the invisible presence of the Illuminated Soul. Since such a mode of expression had a serious

disadvantage for the popular artist, the Buddhist sculptor needed a new turn like the Wheel of the Law in order to enter into the exuberance of the Kushan art.

It seems the minds of the devotees, who now regarded Buddha as the Divine Being, were thirsting for a glimpse of the Buddha, or at least his image. Canonically there was no objection to bringing his shape into the spatial dimensions. The custom had so far withheld them from taking that course. But Mahayana, which had already broken from the past, succeeded in bursting the last barrier between the devotee and the image of the Master, and the only problem for the artist was to determine the figure and features of Buddha. The solution was provided by the Hellenistic tradition and impulse which had already taken firm roots in Gandhara.

When the image of Buddha was introduced, his followers in Gandhara and the North-Western region of the sub-continent had been intimately in touch with the Hellenistic civilization, and had been greatly impressed by it. The people who were already imbibing awe and inspiration from sculptured stories of Buddha's life, must have been only too happy to see a personification of the Lord in the full Olympian grace and dignity. There is no wonder, therefore, that these statues found their way immediately to all the temples and shrines of the Buddhist world.

It has now been proved beyond doubt that it was in the North-Western part of this sub-continent (now Pakistan) that this unique artistic revolution took place. The Buddha figure of Gandhara, which was inspired by the statuesque beauty of sculptured Apollo, found its way in the course of a few centuries to Tibet, Cambodia,

Burma and Thailand. In Japan the figure of the Master was introduced in the 5th century. Chinese images go back to the 4th century. Archaeological missions in Central Asia agree that archtype of the image reached there from Gandhara.

Excavations do not take us far beyond that period of sculpture, but the absolute perfection wrought in the oldest of figures compels us to presume that they had a long history of experiment and development behind them, and we have to conclude that the precursors were made somewhere during the reigns of the Indo-Parthian or Indo-Scythian kings. Pollas Athene continues to brandish the Paternal Lightning of Zeus on the coins of Menander but her image is surrounded by inscriptions in local dialects. Most probably it was in the reign of Menander that Eastern ideology and Western art arrived at a synthesis to create the Gandhara sculpture.

Whatever the real leanings of Menander, by the large number of stupa ruins and Buddha figures which far outnumber all the material so far excavated in the rest of the sub-continent, it becomes certain that Buddhism was very popular in this area, and the kings, sometimes through personal devotion and at others in respect of public sentiments honoured the religion and built for it.

Within a very short time we find that Gandhara became associated with the lives of Bodhistava, living there in one incarnation or the other. Areas were allotted to different Jatakas. Some dared even further and imported Buddha, the Sakayamuni, himself and made him walk in the streets of Gandhara. "He", they said, "came there to save the country from several catastrophies". Thus he is said to have come in person to subdue the Nagaraja of

the Swat river who used to inundate the whole of the surrounding country once in every twelve months. On the intervention of Buddha he is said to have agreed to restrain his scourge and limit it to once in every twelve years. In another Jataka, he is supposed to have subdued the insatiable ogress of smallpox, somewhere in the north of Pushkalavati.

Armed with legend and patronized by the Greek kings and their Kushan successors, Gandhara became the holy land of Buddhism. Some of the Chinese pilgrims were quite content with a visit there without feeling the necessity of going as far down as the Ganges and the Magadha Desha.

The whole of the Gandhara province was studded with spacious and beautiful stupas where the Blessed One had, in his previous existences, made a gift of his flesh, his eyes, his head and his limbs; the first to buy back a dove from a hawk and the last to satisfy a famished tigress. Most of these remains have now been wrested from the layers of oblivion, but some still repose under the tumuli which dot the plains and valleys of Gandhara.

Hiuen Tsang saw a thousand monasteries which ornamented as well as sanctified the area when he visited this land. All the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, who visited the holy places of Buddhism in the 4th century A.D., and after, testify that Kanishka had built the highest pagoda of the country near Peshawar which was his winter capital. With, so to say, the sixth sense of an archaeologist, Foucher located Shahjiki Dheri as the probable site to have once been occupied by the great Kanishka temple, and of course, the long and tedious excavations carried on by Marshal and Spooner revealed the base of a large Pagoda, unequalled

in length and breadth by any other temple in the whole of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Its centre yielded the gold casket which, according to the Chinese testimony, contained the holy relics of Buddha which were deposited by Kanishka himself. This reliquary has the name Kanishka in dotted letters and his image in repousse. Buddha is seated above the lid between the two standing divinities. The reliquary is now the proud possession of the Union of Burma.

The Kushan power declined after the death of Vasudeva in 225 A.D., and the history of Gandhara falls into partial obscurity till Fahien comes to tell us much about its surviving grandeur in 400 A.D. He states that seven hundred priests still served the Patrachaitya at Peshawar and the stupa of the eye-gift was adorned with silver and gold.

The stupa of the eye-gift was raised to commemorate the event when the Bodhistava gave his eye in charity at Pushkalavati (Shehbaz Garhi). But Fahien, as a pious devotee of Buddhism, has not been able to see much of its decay which had actually set in this sub-continent. It is evident that under rulers professing Brahmanical faith, orthodox Hinduism must have been much more prominent than Buddhism in the sub-continent he visited. He was, however, an eye-witness of the decay to the Buddhist holy cities of Gaya and Kapilavastu under the Hindu Gupta empire which was then ruled by its greatest scion Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya.

He talks of actual enmity between the Brahmans and Buddhists and records that at Saravas Brahmans attempted to destroy certain Buddhist structures but were miraculously hindered. It seems bad days for Buddhism had set in. Conditions were,

however, much better in the North-Western region of Gandhara which was still independent of the Brahmanical rule.

In this period when Gandhara remained independent of the Hindu Gupta Empire, the Buddhist sculpture attained its pinnacle of perfection. Among its most typical expressions are both seated and standing statues of Buddha who is usually shown garbed in a smooth tight-fitting robe. This style influenced sculpture in other parts of the sub-continent where similar figures are definitely the descendants of the Gandhara Buddha. After this brief phase of perfection the Buddhist art suffered a rapid and violent decline.

When Son-Yun visited this sub-continent in 520 A.D., he found Gandhara almost in ruins. The region of Gandhara had been ravaged by White Huns two generations before his arrival.

Son-Yun speaks of the Yetha (White Hun) king Mihiragula whom he met in the camp as a person of a very cruel and vindictive nature, practising the most barbarous atrocities, worshipping demons and opposed to the law of Buddha. Nevertheless, he still records the existence at Polu-Sha (Shehbaz Garhi) of beautiful images covered with gold, sufficient to dazzle the eyes. But he was the last man to witness the grandeur of Shehbaz Garhi as on his vindictive return from Kashmir, some fifteen years later, Mihiragula destroyed sixteen hundred of Gandhara's religious establishments, killed two thirds of the inhabitants and reduced the remainder to slavery.

This was the severest blow to the life and culture of Gandhara from which it could never recover. When Hiuen Tsang visited this part of the sub-continent, he found every Sanghrama and Vihara in ruins, overgrown with wild shrubs and in desolation.

The stupas had decayed and the White Huns occupied heretical temples. The jealousy of the orthodox Hindus was militant even during the life time of Harsha. Sasanka, the king of central Bengal, and probably a scion of the Gupta Dynasty, was a worshipper of Siva. Hating Buddhism, he did his best to extract it from the Eastern regions of the sub-continent.

Hiuen Tsang bears testimony to the bitter animosity which marked the relations between Puranic Hindus and the Buddhists.

The art which developed in Gandhara and attained its height during the Kushan period, was indebted most of all, to the Greek culture which flourished in Parthia and Bactria. But in Gandhara, instead of becoming survile to the Greek genius, the local artist was inspired to create a standard, a treatment and a style of his own. He used the Greek technique in the sculpture of human form, and idealised in his own way the spiritual possibilities of radiating composures, peace and love. The image of Buddha selected by Foucher as the oldest among the like, forms a very good subject of study if we have to recognize the common features. This was the pattern which has been followed in chiselling thousands of other Buddhas in varying degrees of course. The full force of the Greek mind is conspicuously visible in the grace and simplicity of features and the beautiful treatment of the garment which has all the grandeur of the Greek toga. Buddha here looks more like a Greek philosopher than an Indian deity, but the artist has not forgotten the points which give the portrait a local colour. The long ear-lobes, the Usnisa covered by hair rising in a graceful knot and the hands in the symbolic position go to prove that the person is the sub-continental Tathagatta.

To the average artist the Blessed One resembled a particular shape and bore many of the 32 major and 80 minor signs of beauty and greatness (Lakshnas); the rest carried the stamp of the individuality of the iconographer. Even within the narrow district of Gandhara the difference of conception prevails. This is very significant in the management of drapery and helps us in tracing the chronological development of this art.

The style changes, but the type remains the same from the Charasada Buddha of the year 72 A.D., to the standing and seated images of the Illuminated One at Takhte Bahi and Sahre Bahlol. There is the same friendly demeanour, the thick foliage tied in the knot over the crown, and the drapery covering both the shoulders. To this type belongs the Buddha of the Kanishka reliquary. Towards the close of the first century we meet a new type: the Scythian Buddha with a moustache. So far the lines do not differ, but some later Buddhas and several youthful Bodhistavas from Takhte Bahi have a square countenance with long moustache, together with some other heavy Mongolian traits.

In all this statuary the conical rise and the knot of hair has been a matter of greater interest than even the Apollo face of the Buddha figure. For whereas the sculptor had little or no idea about the correct features of the Illuminated One, the story about his hair was very clear and had continued without any contradiction. Buddha at the time of his great renunciation had severed his hair with his sword and had never worn them afterwards. According to the religious ideals he ought to have appeared bald. Foucher is of the opinion that the artist thought it sufficient to omit the headgear of Buddha and leave him bareheaded not daring, for

aesthetic reasons, to deprive the Sublime One of his beautiful hair.

The study of drapery in all these cases is also interesting. It is seldom found in the work of the artists at Barhut and Sanchi, but in Gandhara it became as important a feature as the lines of the face and the contours of the body. Drapery in this school of art becomes free, natural and full of nervous unrest. The seated figure of Buddha at Takhte Bahi has a natural drapery falling easy on the wearer. But when copied in the case of seated Buddhas of the second century, it does not fall but spreads out freely. It is on the contrary gathered up in folds and is finally flattened below without emphasising the extremities. The Buddha from Sahre Bahlol shows an advance over the effigies dug out from the mounds at Taxila but it suffers from the same defects in drapery. It proves a gradual departure from the natural and the realistic. The management of drapery during the 4th century once again improves, even transcending the qualities of the 1st century Gandhara art.

The seated Buddha becomes more graceful when the drapery, in the latter half of the 1st century, is depicted in a new style. The right shoulder and the right arm is left free and the feet are allowed to protrude out. During the 4th century A.D., when the Buddhist Gandhara art had outlived the 2nd century decadence and was returning to the classical style, the drapery became more Hellenistic with an advantage that the artist could now make the body visible through the gossamer drapery covering the body and falling in natural folds.

Apart from the Buddha figure, the greatest charm of the Buddhist art lies in the Buddha stories spread in hundreds of Bas Reliefs. Every minute in Buddha's life was a sacred memory and a heritage

for the follower. Buddha had already lived 550 previous lives. To these can be added the stories of 24 other Buddhas who had preceded Sidharatha Gautama. All the important anecdotes of these lives have been artistically depicted in stone.

In the Bas Reliefs of these devotional stories the classical tone of correct representation and the introduction of natural human and animal forms are the distinguishing features of the Gandhara Art.

In Gandhara lie the actual foundations of the Art which flourished in the sub-continent from the 5th to the 10th century A.D. It was here that the principle of naturalness was first accepted and the human form perfected in its minute details. It is the introduction of natural surroundings inhabited by natural figures which places the Gandhara art far superior to any other art produced during the millennium in the entire sub-continent. It was with the perfection of the human form and the love for a realistic expression that scenes of this world and the next, as described in the complicated Mahayanic legends, were made perceptible.

In spite of the fact that all the vestiges of the Gandhara art were scaled down and destroyed by the savage White Huns and later by the followers of Sankara Acharya, the tumuli of this desolation have concealed a great wealth of Bas Reliefs which today fill the museums of Pakistan, India, Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Charsada and Pushkalavati

Charasada is the most important of the sites so far discovered or excavated in the Gandhara region. As already mentioned, Pushkalavati was one of the oldest centres of ancient civilization. It was

an ancient city even for the people of Buddha's time. Before the discovery of the Khyber pass the trade from India to Balkh and Bakhtar (Bactria) was carried through the defile created by the Kabul river. Charsada was the first business centre that greeted the Central Asian caravans heading for this sub-continent and was an equally important centre of export from this country.

Buddhist Jatakas added to its importance by declaring it to be the seat of the Bodhistava who in his different births gave the gift of his flesh, his eyes and even of his head.

Dr. Wheeler attaches great importance to the present site of Pushkalavati and feels that the remains of this region will yield the missing-link between the Moenjo Daro civilization and the historic era of Alexandrian Taxila.

These remains have suffered the most disastrous destruction at the hands of nature. The Swat river which, according to the Jatakas, had obeyed the command of the Blessed One and had stopped its annual scourge, has forgotten the pledge and has cut the regular mound of the remains into four pieces. Its current has already washed away most of what would have been a source of valuable information.

The largest of the four mounds known as the Bala Hisar was partially excavated in 1902-3, but the excavations were not deep enough and have revealed in the upper strata some Sikh and Muslim monuments. But deeper down there still lie buried valuable treasures of information, but it is dwindling day by day by the ravages of the Swat river.

The second highest mound, Mir Ziarat, stands a mile off Bala Hisar. It has also been pierced and tested. The other two tumuli

of Platu and Ghazdheri are lower than the other two. Excavations there have already shown some signs of the Buddhist culture, but once the spade of the archaeological expert gets busy, it is expected to extricate information from the pre-Kushan days down to the oldest times.

Takhte Bahi

Takhte Bahi is a strange modern discovery. The Chinese records on which much of our information regarding Buddhist places is based, are singularly silent about it. Even the reasons as to why these prolific pilgrims did not mention the name of such an important Buddhist shrine, are not yet known to us. The archaeologists have, however, taken out a wealth of ancient Buddhist remains from these mounds. A long range of different sized Buddhas and Bodhistavas from Takhte Bahi have filled our museums. The main group of buildings stands on a small plateau over five hundred feet above the surrounding plain. The big stupa is a huge building within a large court. It has a cross-court full of votive stupas, a monastic quadrangle, monastic cells and a huge assembly hall. To the south of the quadrangle is another court which was decorated by a line of gigantic Buddhas rising to a height of 16 to 20 feet. The most remarkable in design and arrangement is a group of small shrines surrounding the main stupa court which are alternatively crowned with stupa-like decorations and gabled chaityas. The beauty and grandeur provided by the entire composition is unparalleled in the Buddhist world.

Sahre Bahlol

Like Takhte Bahi, Sahre Bahlol has also been discovered quite recently after a complete oblivion of some fifteen hundred years.

The city was probably founded by Kushan kings and finally reduced to debris by the fire and sword of Mihiragula, the Hun worshipper of Siva. The excavators have dug out more than half a dozen large monasteries, burnt and laid low.

But the destroying fire has proved a wonderful preserver. The fall of the superstructure entombed the lower buildings. Human hands never reached them afterwards. The rows of 4½ feet high Bodhistavas on both the sides of the great stupa and the stucco base of the smaller stupa are still in magnificent condition of preservation.

The images both in stucco and stone show a wide range of craftsmanship but all of them have a very high standard of excellence and represent the Gandhara Buddhist art at its best.

Taxila

Our history is, however, most indebted to Taxila for its regular record, depicting the various phases of the Buddhist art and architecture through the ages. It was a rich city when Alexander came and invaded this sub-continent. The king of Taxila offered obedience to the victor and gained his freedom. On the return of Alexander and the defeat of Seleucos, Chandra Gupta became the master of the entire area lying south of the Hindu-Kush. The city revolted against the Maurayas, but was subdued again by Asoka, then still a young prince.

So far Taxila was a non-Buddhist city. As Asoka became a devotee of Buddhism with all the zeal of a convert, the culture of the place assumed a different colour. Soon Taxila (Takshasila of the old) became the greatest Buddhist University of the sub-continent.

The city of the Asokan period is now represented by the Bhir mound which is very close to the present archaeological museum on the southern side of Tamra Nala. The architecture of the city of Bhir mound and its intricate and narrow pathways do not carry us any further in the study of the Buddhist culture during the days of Asoka. It is the tumuli covering several monasteries strewn all over the surrounding hills and plains, which housed the great and renowned university that commands our attention.

Dharmarajika Stupa

On a plateau above Tamra Nala is a cluster of stupas, monastic cells and other chapels. In the centre stands a very large round stupa probably built by Asoka in 300 B.C. The other smaller stupas and buildings can be traced back to the reigns of Azes and Maues extending over to the 5th century B.C. The large stupa has also undergone large-scale repairs with additions and decorations to the main building, but the most preliminary repairs cannot be dated back to earlier than the 2nd century A.D.

The niches on the eastern side are best preserved and their Kanjure stone decorations form a good subject for study. The main dome is surrounded by a path for procession. Excavations on this side have revealed three floors one upon the other. The first was decorated with bangles, the second covered by glass tiles and the third with black stone slabs. The procession path contained 355 coins of Azes II, Soter Megas, Huvishka, Vasudeva and other kings of Kushan and Sassanian origin, and a few pieces of the Gandhara sculpture. The best of these sculptures is the figure of Bodhistava standing in Abhaya Mudra (the attitude of protection).

The main stupa is surrounded by many smaller stupas which

were constructed during the Saka period. Eleven of these have so far been excavated. The work on these buildings revealed that they had been subjected to various repairing operations and some of them were even enlarged in subsequent ages. On digging below the surface several of these smaller structures were found to enfold holy relics. These relics are mostly in stupa-like caskets covered by umbrellas and accompanied by beautiful and costly stone and shell beads.

There are eight small chapels on the south-west side. One of these chapels yielded the relics of Lord Buddha with a silver scroll giving details. The relics which consisted of small pieces of bones were kept in a small gold reliquary, which was in turn kept in a casket of steatite stone and was covered by a heavy stone under the surface of the floor. The fall of the roof had broken the covering stone and the steatite casket but the gold reliquary and the silver scroll were saved from destruction. The inscription, which is in Kharoshti characters, records that the relics were those of Lord Buddha and were enshrined by Urasaka, a scion of Imtavhria, a Bactarian, in the days of Kanishka, the King of Kings.

Further to the south is the Chaitya Hall built by Kanishka. This hall is remarkable for its octagonal apse, which in all other cases in the whole of India and Pakistan is always round. This is a unique example in design.

In a chapel to the south-south-west the floor is covered with glass tiles of transparent azure. Marshall recalls a Chinese tradition which said that glass was originally introduced into China from the northern region of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. The discovery of glass tiles in this chapel and on the procession

path of the main stupa proves that they were originally fixed in the main stupa, and when that procession path was resurfaced, the unbroken tiles were brought to this chapel and put to a further use. The use of glass tiles in the main stupa strengthens the authenticity of the Chinese tradition.

Glen of Giri

About 3½ miles to the south-east of the great Dharmarajika stupa is a range of high hills. The highest of these is crowned by a small fortress which was probably erected by the middle of the 5th century A.D., to offer refuge from Hun invaders to the monks residing in the monasteries of Dharmarajika and many other stupas scattered all over the valley. The hill in turn works as a partition curtain to mark off a few more stupas and monasteries. The glen of Giri has two stupas and two attached monasteries. One set can be dated back to the Parthian-Kushan era and the other to a later date.

The monasteries are built in a cleft above a spring of excellent water. The area covered by these monasteries is 120 yards by 60 yards. The larger stupa stands on a plinth of 62 square feet and the debris now rises to a height of 15 feet.

The monastery of the later date is decorated with stucco. The assembly hall is singularly missing, and it is surmised that while the other portions were built under a huge cliff, the hall was built over the cliff reached by a staircase parts of which are still in existence.

Stupa of Kunala

According to Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, there were four great stupas in Takshasila (Taxila). The first was the stupa of

Elapatra, the Dragon King (Naga Raja) and the second was the stupa marking the place which, the Buddha predicted, would yield four great treasures on the arrival of Maitrya as Buddha. The third stupa marked the place of the sacrifice of head and the fourth commemorated the place where Kunala's eyes were put out.

The stupa of the Naga Raja has been identified with the tank of Hasan Abdal which is now known as the tank of Panja Shah. The second and third stupas have been identified with the ruins on the ridge of Baoti Pind and the Bhallar Stupa crowning the western ridge of the Sarda hill. The Kunala Stupa was eluding the archaeologists for a long time. At long last it was identified by Marshal with the stupa over the ridge of Hathial which commands the whole of the Hare Valley.

The story of Kunala, as recorded by Hiuen Tsang, is very interesting. Kunala was a son of the great Buddhist emperor Asoka Maurya. His step-mother Tishya-rakhshita fell in love with him and induced Asoka to send him as his Viceroy to Takshasila. Disappointed in love, she sent orders that the eyes of Prince Kunala may be removed. For these orders she used the seal of the king which she secured when he was asleep. The ministers of Kunala shuddered at the orders and shrank from its execution but the obedient son forced them to do their job. His eyes were put out and he along with his wife begged his way to the capital Pataliputra where Asoka recognised him by his voice and the strain of his flute, and on knowing the facts put the demonic wife to death. The eyes of Kunala were, however, restored at Bodh Gaya through the good offices of Arhat Ghosha.

The stupa now identified to commemorate this story stands on a rectangular base of 63 feet 9 inches in width and 105 feet in length. Nothing but a fragment of the core of the superstructure has survived but this little portion combined with the 3 terraces gives a fair idea of the time of its erection. A number of architectural pieces of the superstructure which are lying around at the base help one to conclude that the elevation of the dome and drum was strikingly lofty, and that it was a circular tower rising in six or seven tiers. It is also very clear that the terraces and different tiers were decorated with friezes and cornices.

Mohra Muradu

The Buddhist builders of Taxila had a keen eye for the landscape. The selection of Mohra Muradu is an example of this. It lies about a mile to the south-east of Sirsukh. It is a beautiful stupa with high edges, surrounded by dark green shrubs. The stupa has nothing new to offer in style or design. The only remarkable thing about it is the excellent state of preservation in which it has been found by the excavators.

Most of its plaster work and surface decoration with the stone and stucco images have been found in their original form and unmolested by man or nature. The top of the stupa was cleft by the treasure hunters, but as probably they did not find anything valuable, the ruins were left covered with shrubs and debris.

When excavated, it was found that the whole of the structure upto the top of the dome was covered with images of Buddhas and Bodhistavas in close succession one upon the other. The stucco reliefs are coloured, though all the colour has now faded. The slip which was applied over the surfaces before giving a deeper

tone, gives an idea of the colour scheme. The face is left white, but the lips, edges of the nostrils, edges and folds of the eyelids, edge of the hair, folds of necks and ear-lobes are picked out in red while the hair itself is coloured grey black.

The art, as seen on the stupa, reaches a very high standard of excellence. The figures, particularly on the bays of the south side of the plinth, have been endowed with life and movement. In the words of Marshal, "this life and movement is specially evident in some of the attendant Bodhistavas, the swish of whose robes, with the lines delicately contoured beneath them, is wonderfully true and convincing. Delicate, too, and singularly effective are the hovering figures which emerge from the background at the sides of the Buddhas, as if they were emerging from the clouds. Yet another point that arrests the attention is the highly successful manner of portraying the folds of the drapery, the technical treatment of which accords with the best Hellenistic traditions and demonstrates most accurate observation on the part of the artist.

The diaper style of the walls of the monastery dates them to the close of the 2nd century A.D.

In detail and decoration it is an interesting group of rooms comprising some very large chambers. Its most remarkable discovery is a completely round stupa 12 feet in height, inside a cell. Details of the stupa, its decorations comprising elephants and Atlantas in the lowest tier and seated Buddhas in the upper tiers, are intact. Some of the stucco decorations have retained even the traces of colours—crimson, blue and yellow—which once embellished them. The umbrella has, of course, fallen aside but

even that is yet a complete whole and preserves the holes which were used for garlands.

Jaulian

The monastery and the stupa of Jaulian, some three miles east-north-east of Sirkap, represents the Buddhism of the decadent age. The remains are the plinth of a large stupa surrounded by a small wall. The monastery is apparently a double-storeyed building like its parallel in the Mohra Muradu valley. The remains of the upper storey are almost missing. The cells are larger in size and surround a very large court in the background. Alongside the big assembly hall is a group of other rooms providing the covered spaces for kitchen, store and a large dining hall with a partitioned apartment for the officer incharge of food-stuffs.

The introduction of refectories in the monasteries is a clear break from the past. The Buddhist Bhikku was expected to live a very austere life. The cells were meant for his meditation and prayers, and the begging bowl was to suffice all his physical needs. But with the passage of time and the cessation of wealthy patronage of kings and merchants, the monastic life became a luxury. Monasteries began to amass wealth and owned large lands donated by the governments.

STUPAS IN SIND

Sind remained a part of the Buddhist Kingdom even during and after the Hun occupation of Gandhara and the Punjab, but it is curious to note that this province does not have any outstanding remains of the monuments that the religious fervour of the people could have produced. The absence of spacious monasteries of large stupas can be explained by the geographical conditions of the country which do not favour the use of such material for construction work as the slate, Kanjur and steatite stones. The devotees might have erected huge edifices of timber and unbaked brick, and might even have embellished them with gold and silver, but all of them have since perished. We, however, have a large stupa with painted terracotta Buddhas decorating it. Another stupa at Moenjo Daro, which formerly crowned the mound covering the citadel of that ancient city, and two more located at Sudherange Dhado in Saidpur and Thulmir Rukun in the Nawabshah district complete the list of existing stupas and monasteries in Sind.

BUDDHISM IN EAST PAKISTAN

While Buddhism received active patronage in the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Sind, the story was very different in East Bengal. There it had a chequered career through the centuries.

Very little is known of the early history of Buddhism in Bengal. We can only conjecture the arrival of some wandering Bhikkus during the life-time of Buddha who might have preached the religion to the masses of people. Three centuries later Bengal was a part of Asoka's empire and we know for certain that missionaries backed by political power were sent to this part of the land which was comparatively nearer to Pataliputra than the outlying provinces of Kashmir and Gandhara. The success of this mission was assured and the results were more encouraging than expected. But after the fall of the Mauryan Empire and the usurpation of the Magadha Raja by Pushyamitra, the savage effects of the Brahmin reaction to the Buddhist religion must have been widely felt

by the people of North Bengal. At a time when Buddhism was adding to its strength by the conversion of Menander to the faith, Pushyamitra was persecuting all those who did not conform to orthodox Hinduism. With the zeal of a bigoted revivalist he burnt down Buddhist monasteries and slayed monks from Magadha to Jullandhar.

The stray finds of Sangha terracottas at Mahasthan (then known as Pundranagara) and certain places in Murshidabad district show that a part of Bengal formed part of Pushyamitra's kingdom and was subjected to the anti-Buddhist atrocities of the usurper.

After a long gap in history we come across some valuable finds of Kushan coins in the same region and can assume that North Bengal formed part of the conquest of Pataliputra by Kanishka. It is most probable that Kanishka's reign was a period of comparative calm and even of progress for the Buddhists of Bengal. Between Kanishka and the rise of the Gupta dynasty, the history of Bengal is blacked out for the lack of records and monuments.

Under the Gupta regime the suppression of Buddhism was not on the savage scale adopted by Pushyamitra, but all the same the Gupta monarchs were staunch champions of orthodox Brahmanism. Buddhism now became subjected to a systematic economic, cultural and political suppression. The coins, monuments and inscriptions agree in furnishing abundant evidence of the recrudescence during the Gupta period of Brahmanical Hinduism at the expense of Buddhism and of the favour shown by the ruling powers to classical Sanskrit at the expense of the more popular dialects which had enjoyed the patronage of Buddhists.

Guptas maintained a thin veneer of religious toleration, but

the scions of the same family who governed Bengal were more militant, and after a long absence of historical record we come across the anti-Buddhist outrages by Sasanka, the Gupta King of Central Bengal, who came as far as Bodh Gaya, dug up and burnt the holy bodhi tree on which Asoka had lavished devotion, broke the stone marked with the foot-prints of Buddha at Pataliputra, destroyed the convents and dispersed the monks, carrying his persecution across the Nepalese hills.

Harsha Vardhana was only a titular overlord of Bengal. The administrative power lay in the hands of the local Rajas and hence the Bengali Buddhists did not gain much from the Buddhistic zeal of that great sovereign. After his death his kingdom was usurped by his minister Arjuna or Arunasa. This Arjuna had a blind fury against everything Buddhist, and as a result he even courted political disaster for himself and defeat for India.

In the obscure century which followed Arjuna, the bulk of Bengal's population stuck to Buddhism.

When the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Bengal in the middle of the 7th century, he found Buddhists still following their religion zealously. Samatata (the modern districts of Noakhali and Tippera) was an important kingdom at this time. There were still about 30 Buddhist Sanghramas and 2,000 priests in the country; but the temples of Brahmanical gods numbered one hundred.

Buddhism had one of its finest periods of patronised progress under the Khadgas of Bengal. The Asrafpur plates were issued from a place named Karmmanta which has been indentified with Bad Kamta near Comilla. The area round Bad Kamta appears to have been a stronghold of Buddhism.

East of Subhapur in Bad Kamta is the village Viharamandal, apparently a Buddhist name. It is amusing to note that the Brahmanical prejudices against Buddhism have survived there to this day. The Hindus of the surrounding villages will never utter the name of Viharamandal in the morning. They believe that it will surely spoil their midday meal. In the morning they refer to it as West village or East village, North or South village according to their relative geographical position.

The ravages of time and bigoted vandalism have however, destroyed all that was built in the Khadga period. We have so far found only one brass chaitya and a statuette of Dhyani Buddha (both discovered at Asrafpur) which can be safely attributed to this period.

While the Khadgas were ruling in Eastern Bengal (Samatata), West Bengal was included in the Kingdom of Aditya Sena, the Gupta monarch who was a staunch follower of Hinduism.

The eighth century A.D. appears as a period of blank chaos in the history of East Pakistan. It is only after the rise of Palas in North Bengal towards the beginning of the 9th century A.D., that the social and political conditions of Bengal rise out in a clear relief.

The reign of the Palas was the golden age of Buddhism in Bengal. Politically Palas were quite strong. Dharmapala and Devapala wielded invincible authority not only in North Bengal but in the whole of Northern India. They were patrons of arts and architecture. New schools of iconography flourished all over the country. Taranath mentions the names of two master-sculptors, Dhimana and his son Vitapala; but the number must be multiplied by

thousands if we have to consider the masterly productions scattered over a thousand centres of that culture. The great wealth of admirable images strewn everywhere shows that there was hardly a village in those days which did not have a Buddhist Vihara or temple. Though now in mutilated condition, they are beautiful and numerous enough to fill and embellish many a museum.

During the latter part of the tenth century the Pala kingdom was temporarily over-run by the hillmen Kamhojas who set up one of their chiefs as king. The Kamhojas were, however, expelled by Mahipalla, the ninth sovereign of Pala dynasty, who reigned for 40 years. Of all the Pala kings, he is the best remembered. He was a monarch with missionary zeal for Buddhism and his reign is credited for having helped the revival of Buddhism in Tibet which had been weakened by the persecutions of Langderma a century earlier. Much of the Buddhist literature of Bengal has been preserved in Tibetan translations.

With one more interruption from the Chasi Kaivatra tribe which attacked and usurped the power for a brief period, the Palas remained monarchs of Magadha till 1197. King Govindapala is known to have been on the throne in A.D. 1175, and Indradynmua (Pala) was on the throne when Muslim conquerors came to Bihar. The kingdom of Bengal had, however, been lost to the Palas long before.

Buddhist Mysticism in Bengal

During the best days of Buddhism under Pala rulers Bengal witnessed the rise and growth of a new trend in the Buddhist philosophy. The new school is known as Sahajayana which represents a later phase of Mahayana Buddhism of Madhyamiea type. The

teachers of this school were known as Sidhas who numbered 84 in all. The record of their teachings is mostly lost in original. They flourished from the early 10th to the end of the 12th century, and their work was transplanted by Bhikku refugees to Tibet when parts of Bengal were falling bit by bit to non-Buddhist rulers of Sena and Verman dynasties.

The discovery of Charyacharya-Vinischaya has revealed a new vernacular which was in vogue in Bengal during the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a collection of 50 songs composed by 23 mystic *gurus*. Among them Kanhu, Saraha, and Bhusuku are the most prolific. From the Tibetan collection of Tanjur (Batan-Hgyur) we get the names of 53 works composed by them. A few manuscripts by Kanhu and Saraha have been found in original and edited by Dr. Shaheedullah with the help of their Tibetan translations. We are, therefore, in a position to probe into the nature of this philosophy. Its general trend was esoteric. According to Sahajayana the disciple aspiring for Mohsh must be guided by an efficient Guru, and nobody else but a qualified Guru could initiate the disciple into its mysteries. The literature of Sahajayana is full of such statements as "the truth that is free from duality is taught by the Guru". "There is nothing unattainable for the man whom the Guru favours", etc. This testifies the exalted position given to the preceptor but the qualifications incumbent on the Guru were also very exacting. He had to find the special spiritual aptitudes of the disciple and suggest to him the path most suitable for his needs. The spiritual aptitudes were distributed in five Kulas, technically called Dombi, Nati Rajaki, Chandali, and Brahmani. The nature of Kulas is determined by five Sakandas. The Sakti

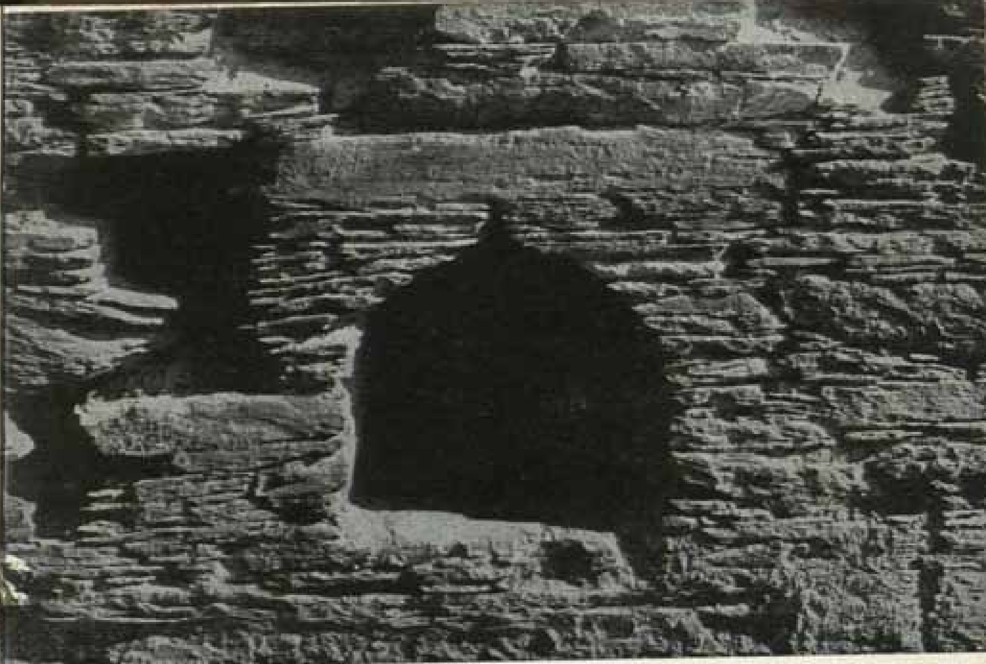
assumes five different forms according to the prominence of Sakandas and the best course for the Sadhakas is to follow his special Sakti in his spiritual march. The work of the Guru lay in evolving that particular energy in the disciple which was strongest in him and thus help him to perform his Sadhna.

The Sidhas or the leaders of this school had evolved a unique system of Yoga. It believed in 32 nerve-channels in the head with brain or the highest part of the head as the place of great bliss. The object of the aspirant was to have control over all these nerve-channels and achieve the state of Sahaja or great blissfulness. When this state was attained, the material world disappeared from view and the Sadhaka found in himself the sole reality.

The rise of this philosophy proves for certain that Buddhism had by now not only accepted the Hindu Pantheon of gods and goddesses but had also inculcated the Hindu philosophy of Ataman and Yogachare. It was definitely a downward trend and when fallen to such an extent, the all-absorbing Hinduism accepted Buddha as the ninth Autar (Incarnation) of Vishnu and absorbed the main body of the Buddhists in the sub-continent discarding the rest who were still loyal to catholic Buddhism.

When the Palas were supreme in the north-east corner of Bengal, the family of Chandras grew strong and contested the authority of the Palas. Another branch of the Chandras held sway over Vanga.

These Chandras were Buddhists and had their capital in Rohitagiri (Red Hill). This must be a Sanskrit version of the Lalmai range which occupies the centre of Tippera district. It is a low picturesque range of hillocks, lying five miles west of Comilla. Ex-



Corbelled niche from Takhte Bahi, District Mardan
(1st—5th century A.D.)

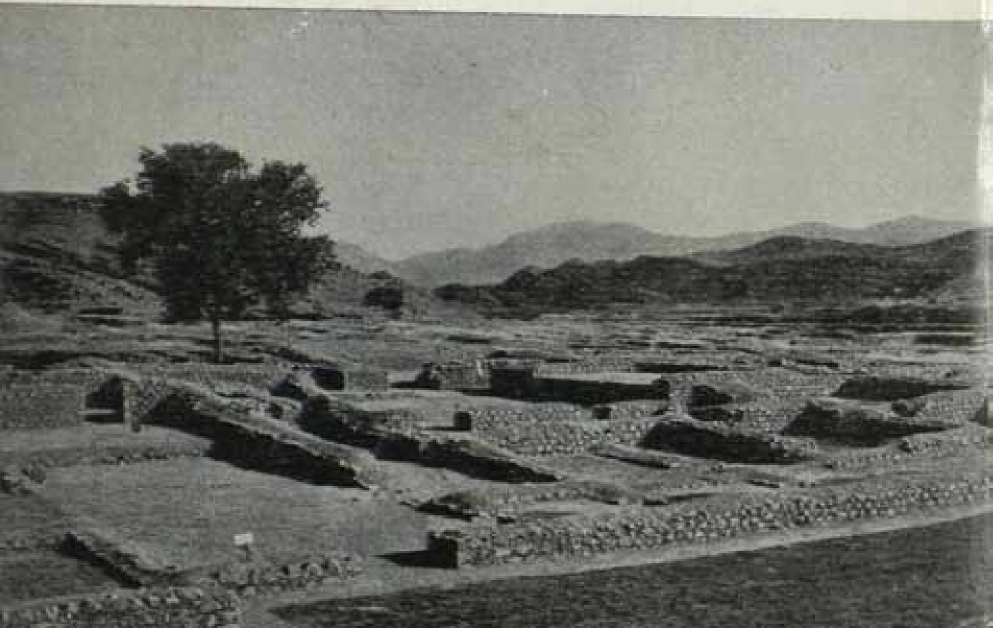
Remains of the Monastery at Takhte Bahi (C. 1st—5th century A.D.)





North-Western Section of remains excavated at Bhir Mound

The Palace Block at Sirkap





General view of the Double-Headed Eagle Stupa (C. 1st century A.D.)

General view of monastery at Mohra Moradu





Circular toilet-tray of fine grey schist from Sirkap, Taxila (2nd century B.C.)



Half of a broken toilet-tray of yellowish brown Steatite from Sirkap, Taxila (1st century A.D.)



Copper incense burner from Sirkap, Taxila



Toilet-tray of grey schist from Sirkap, Taxila (1st century B.C.)



Gandhara stone relief depicting Buddha in the attitude of benediction from Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila (C. 2nd century A.D.)



Gandhara stone frieze depicting scenes from Buddha's life. From North-West Frontier Province (C. 2nd century A.D.)



Part of a Gandhara stone frieze depicting an ascetic with a female (Yakshini). (C. 2nd century A.D.)



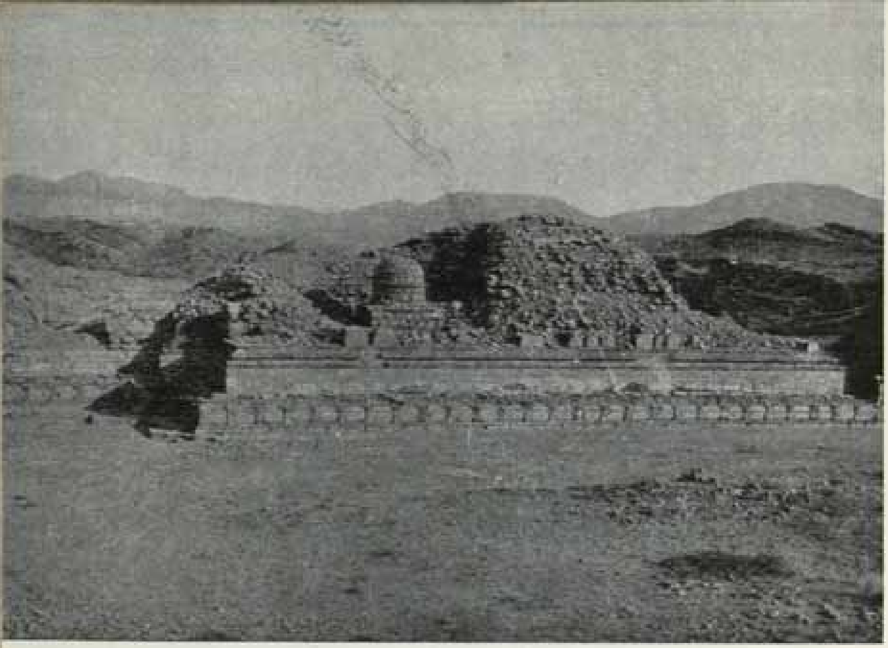
Gandhara stone image of the Bodhistava Maitreya from Mohra Moradu, Taxila (C. 2nd century A.D.)



Bust of the Sleeping Musician in stone. From Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila (2nd century A.D.)

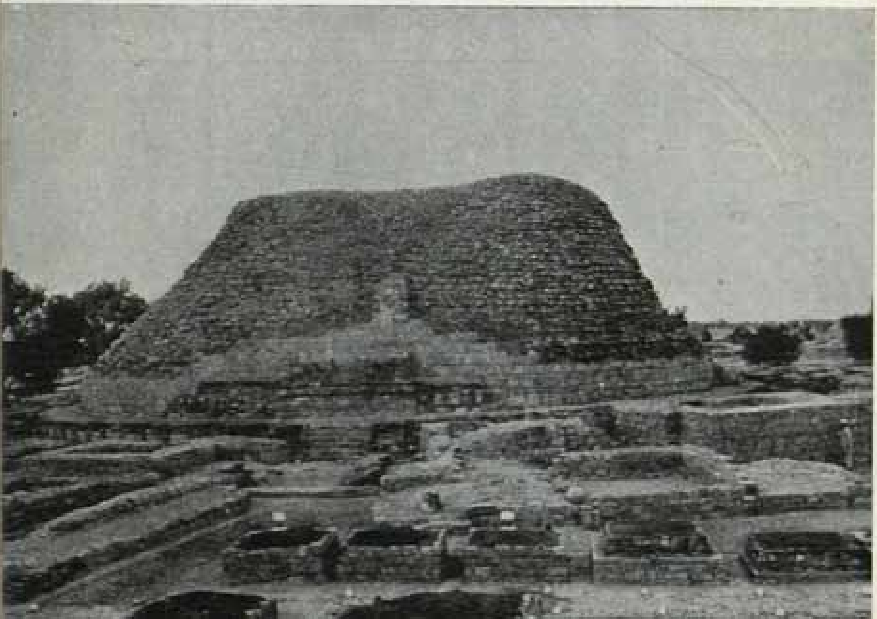


Gandhara stone frieze depicting a scene from Buddha's life. From North-West Frontier Province (C. 2nd century A.D.)



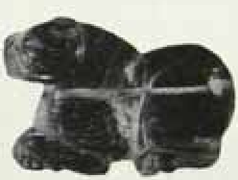
General view of Kunala Stupa from North-West at Taxila, showing a smaller stupa immured in its core

General view of the Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila





Stupa-shaped casket covered with gold leaf, from Stupa A. I. at Kalawan, Taxila. (C. 1st century A.D.)



Crystal Lion from Stupa N. 7 at Dharmarajika, Taxila (C. 1st century A.D.)



Toilet-tray of grey schist from Sirkap, Taxila (1st century A.D.)



Buddha in the Indrasaila Cave. From the North-West Frontier Province (C. 2nd century A.D.)

Stucco reliefs on the main Stupa at Mohra Moradu, Taxila—now in the Taxila Museum—(4th-5th century A.D.)

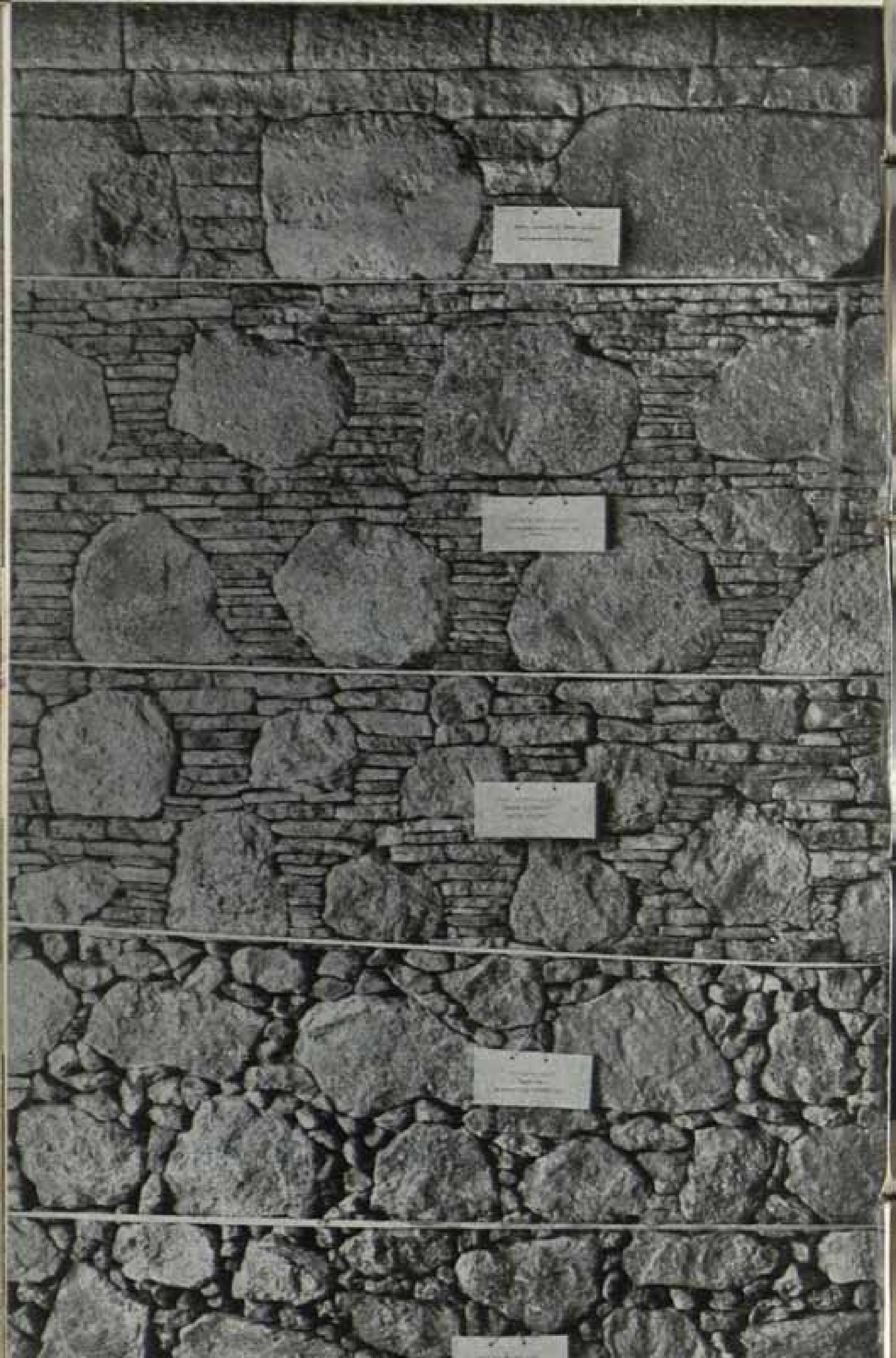


Small stucco head of Buddha from Mohra Moradu, Taxila (C. 4th-5th century A.D.)



Stucco head of Buddha from Jaulian, Taxila (C. 4th-5th century A.D.)

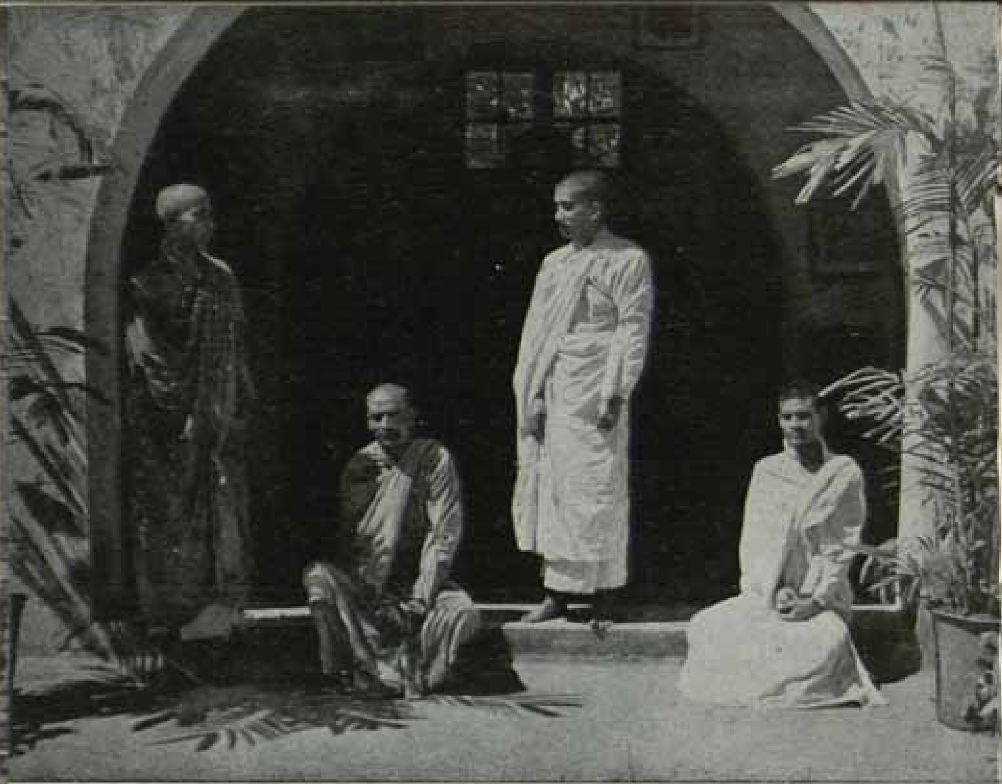




Examples of stone masonry at Taxila illustrating its evolution from 3rd century B.C. to Medieval Times



Archaeological Museum at Taxila. Interior view of the South Gallery and Central Hall

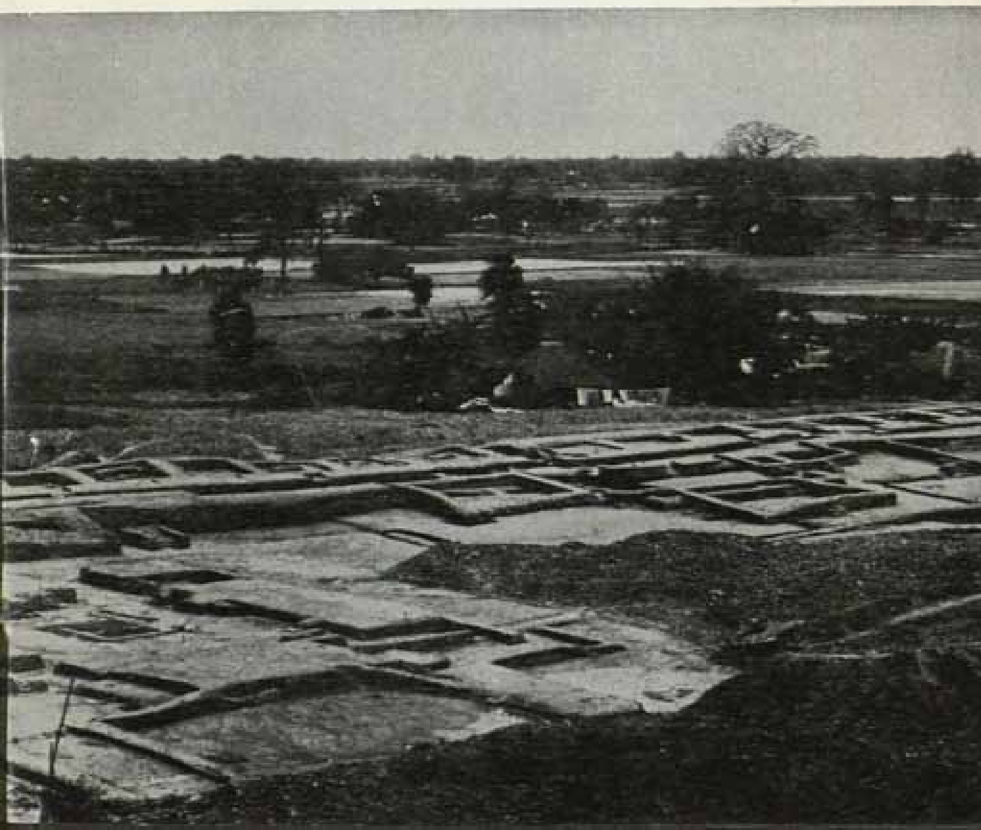


Monks at an East Pakistan Buddhist Monastery

Bird's-eye-view of the excavated area in northern rampart wall (Eastern Section), at Paharpur, Rajshahi District, East Pakistan

Ruins of a votive stupa at Paharpur, Rajshahi District, East Pakistan







Terracotta plaque from Paharpur, East Pakistan. (C. 8th century A.D.)



Terracotta plaque from Paharpur, East Pakistan. (C. 8th century A.D.)

plorations on various peaks of this range have yielded considerable material remains.

Puran Chandra is the first man of note among the Chandras of Rohitagiri. His grandson Trailokya Chandra was a warrior and is said to be the mainstay of the king of Harikela or Vanga (Southern Bengal). Trailokya seems to have annexed the kingdom of Chandra Duvipa which was the name of the tract of land now forming the district of Bakerganj.

Trailokya's son Srichandra Deva mastered the whole of Vanga. He issued his copper-plate grant for Vikrampur now known by the ruins of Rampala, situated in the heart of Vikrampur Pargana of the Dacca district.

The Chandras were ousted from Bengal in the beginning of the 11th century by Vermans who in their turn made room for Senas by the end of the same century. The Palas had already been limited to Magadha by the Chandras of Bengal, and when the Vermans usurped the Chandra kingdom, hard days for Buddhism came to Bengal which was the last resort of this religion in the sub-continent.

The Senas were no friends of Buddhism. Vijaya (1070-1108), the grandson of the founder of Sena dynasty in Bengal, warred with Palas and wrested northern Bengal from them. The Senas being zealous Brahmans, had special reason for hostility against the Buddhist rulers of Bengal, and having once cleared it, Vallala Sena, known as Ballal Sen, completed the work of destroying Buddhism in Bengal and reviving the Hindu Caste system. He introduced Kulinism among Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas, so that by the time the Muslim General Ikhtyaruddin Mohammad

bin Bakhtyar conquered Nudiah at the end of the 12th century, there was no Buddhist institution left in Bengal.

Buddhist Art in East Bengal

Bengal was the last resort of Buddhism in India but the destruction of its artistic wealth has been so complete that it is now impossible to judge the degree of the sway of this religion on the population of this province. It is just like the aftermath of a flood which once swept the entire country and left it strewn with a multitude of broken objects, stones and pot-sherds on its recession. Even in this debris we do not reach far back into the antiquity. The oldest centre of culture so far discovered appears to be the fort of Chandra Varman (4th century A.D.), the earthen ramparts of which enclose a thickly populated tract of land 2½ x 2½ miles in area. This magnificent fort is situated in the southern area of Faridpur district but no image discovered here can safely be attributed to this period. Only the statuette of Avalokitesvara fished out from the Sailadaha river approaches this date closer than any other relic. A number of other images have been discovered from this area but they do not belong to this period. The beautiful copper lotus with moving petals, the great image of Gautama Buddha in black stone and the artistic Marichi all hail from the 10th century A.D.

Badkamta

Badkamta, 12 miles west of Comilla, was an important centre of Buddhism in the Khadga period. In the north-east of Badkamta stands a curious mound about 25 feet high surmounted by a lingam. These are the remains of the stupa seen by Hiuen Tsang. The surmounting lingam proves for certain that it had fallen a prey

to Brahmans and was used by them. Belasa, situated only a mile west of Badkamta, yielded a magnificent image of Avalokitesvara. Five miles further north was discovered a life-size statue of Vajrapani Bodhistava from Subhapur. A fine image of Dhyani Buddha was discovered from Bagherpur village east of Subhapur. All these images prove the existence of Buddhist institutions in and around Badkamta.

Paharpur

Excavations at Paharpur have revealed a magnificent specimen of the Buddhist temple which has proved enigmatical in design and decoration. The remains of the monastery stand on a very large cruciform. The layout is absolutely unique in the history of Indo-Pakistani architecture and with the exception of Lalmai monastery, has its counterpart only in the Buddhist monasteries of Java and Burma. The importation of the design from the southern islands is yet a disputed question. There are exponents who believe that the design was first developed in this province and was later on copied by the builders in the countries of South-East Asia.

The decoration of the lower portions of the monastery is another enigma which has defied the imagination of all archaeologists. The monastery has been built on a raised cruciform with angular juttings on the sides. The angular sides are all decorated with the Krishna and Siva mythology, at places in elaborate detail. The upper portion of the main Buddhist temple is decorated with terracotta plaques which had its development during the Pala period.

The pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses at the base is variously interpreted by authorities. It is, however, agreed that this

unique phenomenon is the result of religious intolerance during those days. With scant regard for the other religion the Pala architects relied on the ready made material found in the ruins of Hindu temples. This view is further supported by the presence of Hindu sculptures on the reverse of many of the slabs utilised in the structure. But the continuity of the Krishna legends contends the truth of this theory and the question still remains open to dispute.

The Paharpur monastery is one of the largest structures this side of the Himalayas, covering a tract of 920 feet square with a monumental entrance on the north and having thick pillared halls. The platform has been raised with the help of square cells which were filled with debris and sand providing a strong base for the upper structure. The second stage had 177 cells which opened in the long aisles of the Varrandah and at one time provided shelter to 700 monks.

The shape of the upper structure can only be imagined and it is surmised that it was pyramidal in shape. The excavations have revealed that the entire structure underwent vast repairs, probably in the days of Mahipala. But these repairs appear to have been carried out by some careless architects of the time who were not versed in the Buddhist legends. Terracotta plaques have been arranged according to the shape and form of images and any idea of sequence has simply been jettisoned as useless. In the new arrangement the type of the image and not the sequence of the story is the criterion. A bull is followed by a bear and the bear in its turn is followed by a rampant elephant. The jumbling of plaques has made the work of the archaeologist difficult and

tedious, and the temple is not in a position to record the legends as they were in vogue at the time of its construction.

In spite of this mal-arrangement, terracotta plaques still remain the most important and most numerous specimens of antiquity from Paharpur. Some two thousand are still *in situ*, while about eight hundred specimens have found their way to various museums in India and Pakistan.

Paharpur cannot, however, be proud of having been the pioneer in this art. The history of terracotta goes back to the pre-historic finds from Harappa and Moenjo Daro. Stone sculpture was limited to a few places where there was abundance of material, either due to the natural surroundings or the rich patronage and religious importance of the place. But the richness, variety and exuberance of the material from Paharpur is unrivalled.

The terracotta art of Paharpur belongs to the close of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century A.D. This was the time when Buddhism was a spent-force as a religious philosophy in this sub-continent. Even its force as a devotional legend was on the wane. Furthermore, the classical restrictions on the chisel of the iconographist had died out by this time. The freedom from the canons of religion and art gave a unique freedom to the artists of Paharpur and they could allow the fancy to roam at leisure with a medium which offered a comparative ease of production. Their imagination wandered from a set variety of scenes to depict everyday life in Bengal, and we have a document, richer in the social history of Bengal than any treatise so far discovered. While the creative genius of the sculptor was limited to the details of form and anatomy, the terracotta artists revelled in reproducing

every conceivable scene which life and jungle stories, fiction, legend and fancy could conjure up before him. The Paharpur artists have produced a folk art of the soil to which they belonged.

A unique side of the story of this art is that the artist of this part of Bengal never worried about the medium he had to utilize. The details of the composition of many stone reliefs have been continued and completed in terracotta. This indifference to material can be explained by the fact that it was immensely easier to manufacture terracottas while the stone had to be brought from considerable distances.

A close study of these terracotta plaques also reveals that Buddhism, though flourishing as if in a golden age, had reached its decadence. The old Brahmanical system of barter had already produced its effects. While on the one hand the Hindus had accepted many of the deities of the Buddhist Pantheon, they had succeeded in making their own gods and goddesses quite agreeable to the Buddhist taste. Hence the terracotta galleries have a large number of Sivas in various forms along with Brahma, Vishnu and Ganesh. Buddha, however, always occupies the most venerated and central position. The Buddha deities represented here do all belong to the Mahayana school. Buddha in various attitudes with his halo and bodhi tree is followed by the Bodhistava Pantheon, Manjuairis, Dhyani Buddhas and Jasbhalas (the god of wealth). Among the female divinities Taras are the most popular images. The Gandharas are the denizens of the sky and are shown in numerous plaques as flying alone or with the Vidyadharas, their female counterparts. Many Naga rajas are said to have paid their obedience to the Lord while he was living, and Paharpur could

not manage without these deities. These Nagas and Naginis are often shown paying homage to the Blessed One. The presence of Nagas and Naginis does not, however, mean the presentation of Jatakas at Paharpur. Passing through Mahayana philosophy Buddha had by now lost his human entity and his birth stories were no longer a subject for thought and conjecture. He was a god and belonged to the Pantheon of Dhyani Buddhas, Bodhistavas and human Buddhas who influenced the lives of human beings from their celestial seats.

The main characteristic of the terracotta work at Paharpur is its dynamic quality. Movements of men and women fill a large number of plaques. The rest are grotesque figures, centaurs and hybrid birds and animals belonging to various Tantaric stories.

All these representations are found, in the words of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, "in a bewildering profusion and confusion. They are set in the building without coherent sequence, and the examination of them has (and was doubtless intended to have) the excitement of a voyage of discovery".

Rohitagiri

A passing reference has already been made to the Rohitagiri of Chandras as identical to the Lalmai range. The Lalmai range is a light red plateau rising from 40 feet to, at places, one hundred feet in height and extending over ten miles in length. Its importance as a centre of ancient culture was recognized as far back as 1875 when the work on the Comilla-Kalirbazar Road had exhumed the remains of a very thick and extensive boundary wall. A copper-plate inscription of one Rana Vanka Malla discovered on Lalmai in 1803 had proved that the town of Patti kera or Patikara

had also existed on the same hill, with a large monastery within. But the actual site of this town, which had been referred to in the Burmese chronicles of 11th and 12th centuries, was accidentally discovered during the years of World War II. Digging trenches for defence, a military contractor chanced on a very big reservoir of bricks, and the mistake was realised only after his men had already done considerable damage to those vestiges of great archaeological value. A large number of bricks and reliefs had been dug out and used up when further damage was stopped.

It was discovered that the thick boundary wall, which was so far taken to be the remains of some old fort of Rohitagiri, was in fact the wall of Pattikera monastery mentioned in the Burmese chronicles of the 11th and 12th centuries and in the copper-plate of 1803 which recorded the grant of land to the same institution.

The entire hill is covered with mounds of different sizes. They have been divided under 18 main groups of which Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 10 have been examined. Mound No. 5 is the largest ruin. The plan very much resembles the Paharpur monastery, and though it was not probably so nicely decorated, it must have vied with Paharpur in richness, exuberance and colour. Terracotta plaques of Buddha surrounded by pannels depicting divine and semi-divine figures have been found still on the existing walls. This mound has been named as Anandaraja's palace.

To the south of this are mounds Nos. 6 and 7 which are called Ruphan Kanya's palace and Bhojeraja's palace respectively. No. 6 is again a central building surrounded by a massive brick wall. The inner portion of this building is also profusely decorated with plaques representing Buddha with his pantheon, human acrobats,

warriors, birds and beasts.

The structure of mound No. 10 seems to have stood on a cruciform. Its sides have been ravaged beyond recognition. The remains, however, prove that from the sides of its re-entrant angles to the inner halls and galleries it was lavishly decorated with terracotta and sculpture. It was on this site that seven pots containing tiny images of Buddha in bronze were found. Thirteen of these miniatures were recovered. All of them are in earth-touching attitude. They are two inches high, bear religious seals and resemble the votive images excavated from Jhewari in the district of Chittagong, dating back to 9th century A.D.

Paundra Vardhana

The Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen Tsang had found Paundra Vardhana (Mahasthan) flourishing with Buddhist monks and monasteries. It was once again a centre of this religion during the Pala regime, but with the advent of Senas all the sacred Buddhist monasteries were turned into Siva temples. A notable example of this is the mound of Gokul Medh. The temple is built on a cruciform plan with circular construction so popular with the Palas of Bengal. It is evident to the trained eye that the upper floor carried a stupa but the entire thing was removed and replaced by the Siva Linga (11th and 12th centuries A. D.) and covered by a square shrine and a porch at a slight angle.

No traces of the Buddhist art are left on the walls of the temple and we can only judge it to be a Buddhist temple by its construction and existence of the four other buildings on four corners of the cross making it (Panchararetara) five-fold in type.

There must be many more examples of the Buddhist art turned

into Brahmanical temples and finally destroyed by invaders. More elaborate excavations will bring more examples to light.

Recently another extensive centre of the Buddhist culture was discovered in East Pakistan about 6 miles west of Comilla on the Mainamati-Lalmai ridge. The excavations at this place have revealed the presence of a Buddhist stupa enclosed by a very large monastery. The remains belong probably to the Chandras who ruled South-East Bengal between 900 A.D. and 1050 A.D. with Rohitagiri as their capital. It is now fairly certain that this place is identical with Lalmai, at the southern end of the ridge. These Chandras were Buddhists, and under them the masses of the country-side embraced Buddhism on a very wide scale.

CONCLUSION

This brief account of the cultural heritage of Buddhism brings into relief a few facts. It shows that the greatest centre of the Buddhist art in the entire world has been the Gandhara area in West Pakistan. In this art the physical attractiveness of Hellenism blended in an unsurpassed harmony with reflective spiritualism of the East. It was here that Mahayana rose to the status of a world religion and spread across the Karakoram range to Tibet, Mongolia, China and Japan. In fact the history of West Pakistan can be divided into three great periods, each of which produced its own characteristic civilization: the pre-historic period of Moenjo Daro and Harappa civilization, the period of Buddhism and the Muslim period. Except for the brief rule of the early Mauryas, West Pakistan was never a part of a Hindu Empire, and even the Mauryan Empire in its third generation produced Asoka, one of the mightiest and most lovable figures that history has ever produced.

In East Pakistan Buddhism found refuge when it was being per-

secuted in the rest of the sub-continent, and here again it left its artistic marks, although not as magnificent as those of Gandhara. Even today there is a Buddhist minority in East Pakistan which lives a happy and honourable life with the Muslims in Pakistan. It is sure of its future, of tolerance and respect and of the full safeguard of its human rights. The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan has already incorporated in the Constitution the guarantee of "Freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion". The Constituent Assembly further lays down:—

"Subject to public order and morality, every religious denomination shall enjoy freedom in the management of its religious affairs including the establishment and maintenance of religious and charitable institutions and the acquisition of movable and immovable property for that purpose.

"Subject to regulations to be made in this behalf every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to procure exclusively for religious purposes all articles which are proved as being essential for worship in accordance with the rules, rites, ceremonies and customs of that denomination.

"No person attending any educational institution shall be required to take part in any religious instruction or to attend any religious worship other than that of his own community or denomination.

"No community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any educational institution maintained by that community or denomination.

"No educational institution maintained wholly out of funds provided by a particular community or denomination shall be refused recognition by the State solely on the ground that it refuses admission to persons of a different community or denomination.

"No person shall be compelled to pay any special taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the propagation or maintenance of any particular religion other than his own".

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